

March 9, 2011

To: Senate committee for Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes

From: Antone Denbowski, Vice President Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance

Senators,

I am writing this letter in support of the amendment to 1994 PA 451, by amending section 503 (324.503) which would restrict the MDNR from purchasing additional lands without disposing of equal amounts already in their possession.

My reasons for this request are:

1. The MDNR has cried "poor" for many years now when it comes to paying the PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) that they owe on state held land. Local units of government can ill afford to lose any further monies to support their units.
2. Restrictions on uses on land currently held by the MDNR are more common with each passing day. Currently over 124,000 acres of these lands are designated as Natural Areas that restrict or make access difficult. The MDNR is planning to create Biodiversity Stewardship Areas which will not allow many traditional uses on lands that were purchased with monies from sources that were derived from uses that would be restricted.
3. The MDNR is attempting to cloud this issue with a smoke and mirror approach claiming that these purchase limitations would prevent development of trails for equestrian, ORV, and snowmobile use. How sad when the record clearly shows that that they are restricting these uses on lands currently under their control.
4. The MDNR has shown that they clearly are pursuing agendas and uses of the lands they hold in trust for the people of this state that will restrict development of the resources on those lands for good of the people.

For these reasons we ask you to support this legislation.

Respectfully,

Antone Denbowski